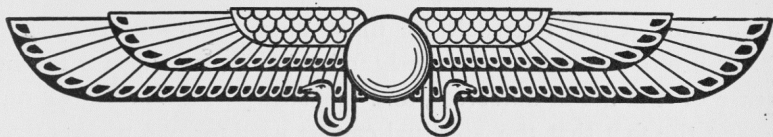


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, +
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+ MARIE A. WALSH.

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THE SIGNS OF TRUE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

IT is quite impossible to define or describe that subtle thing which is denoted by the word "spirituality"; otherwise, it would not need a special word as its symbol, nor characterize that highest region of ideal existence—the goal towards which so many efforts, such fervent aspirations, are directed. For spirituality is something different from all else, an essence strange and deep, not to be expressed in other terms than itself—beyond mind, beyond thought, consequently beyond speech. To one who has never recognized in himself the spiritual, it is as hopeless to explain it as to make one born blind understand the loveliness of a sunlit landscape. There is a faculty wanting, a sense yet unborn, an experience untasted, therefore unimaginable.

Yet, when first the spiritual touches our consciousness, it is often so faintly that, confused by the clamor of grosser voices, we make the mistake of identifying the new and strangely sweet thrill of its touch with one of these familiar, or at least not wholly strange, sounds. And thus, not looking deep enough, not duly discriminating, we pass beside the reality and attach ourselves to somewhat other, seeking and longing in vain to find in it that new life we had tasted.

Or even in our gropings after this new life, when first it has touched us, we may fall into another error. Recognizing—as

when once it has been felt we must always do—the unmistakable touch of the spiritual, eagerly following it, striving for the increase of the life in ourselves, and forgetting in the ardor of our pursuit the fact that the spiritual can be used for evil no less than for good purposes, we may become deluded, led away from the true path of divine evolution; and thus, by failure to discriminate between the spiritual in the service of the divine and the spiritual in the service of the dark powers, we may find ourselves at last at a point where, to regain the true path, we must, with pain and agony, retrace the steps of the way we have come and enter from the bottom the steep ascent that leads to the realm of true life.

Such mistakes may lead us far astray; and, therefore, though the spiritual itself cannot be described, but must be known by each for himself, it may be useful to indicate, however imperfectly, some of the leading signs which show that the right path has been found, the unswerving following of which will surely lead to the steady growth of the new divine life; and, however deep the darkness or prolonged the interval of apparent deadness may be, will always be marked by our clearer recognition and our fuller consciousness of the *true* spiritual life itself. These signs are not that spiritual life itself, though they are the invariable accompaniment of its growth in those who tread the path of Compassion; therefore, their presence, their degree of development and their just inter-relation afford indications by which one may be greatly assisted both in the difficult task of discriminating the natures of those around us, and in judging, to some extent, of our own progress along the path.

The most marked and characteristic of these signs may be denoted by the term “Balance.” I use this word deliberately as a symbol; for, though in ordinary usage it conveys the most conspicuous feature of the conception I wish to depict, yet I desire to give it a much deeper and far wider significance in this connection than the word itself ordinarily carries. For the man in whom the true spiritual life is developed displays not only that complete rectitude of judgment, fairness of appreciation, breadth of view and all roundness of perception which we habitually associate with the idea of a well-balanced mind, but he will exhibit other fea-

tures also. While there will be found in him a marvelous sensitiveness and an exquisite capacity of feeling and perception, vibrating to the faintest touch and stirred by every power around, yet he will stand unshaken in this calm peace of his inner self, however violent the storm, however keen the sensation, however mighty the tide of life amidst which he stands, rock-like. In reality, he remains so steadfast because he sees things in their proper proportions and estimates them at their true values. Possessed of discrimination—*i. e.*, of *spiritual* vision—he perceives the relative permanence or transiency of all that befalls him; and, measuring all by the standard of the eternal, he is not swept off his balance by any temporary or illusive appearance. Therefore, he is always calm, of wise judgment and cool reflection, giving to all its due weight and its just measure of consideration; not excitable, never fussy; neither too much elated in success, nor cast down in failure; ignoring no side or aspect of a question, yet perfectly, immovably fixed in the great principles of the Good Law.

Exaggeration, excitement, over-coloring, all that savors in the faintest degree of unreality or falsehood, is absolutely foreign to his nature. And yet he is no cold abstraction, too self-absorbed to feel deeply and strongly. On the contrary, there is in him a far mightier depth of nature, an indefinitely greater capacity to feel and to respond, than in the wildest and most rampant of emotionalists; but the very condition of that depth of power and profound capacity is a nature so firmly rooted in the very heart of life that nothing can shake or overthrow it.

Pages could well be written on this one quality of Balance; but, perhaps, enough has been said to show what is meant and implied by the word, so that the reader can elaborate the details at his pleasure.

Accompanying this firm equilibrium of the whole nature, inseparable from it in the true growth of the divine in man, and equally an unfailing sign of that growth, there is another quality, one for which, however, this English tongue of ours offers no single word both accurate and expressive. For it is that quality which forms the very root and essence of sympathy, of compassion, of true tenderness, of charity, of that divine love whereof great

poets have sung and mystics have told; that divine love whereof all earthly love is but the faint and shadowy symbol and reflection, though in the Saviours of the world it has been made manifest to men. Perhaps it may best be called the "love that gives," since the free and perfect giving of Itself, of All, is the very nature of the Spirit. It is the joyful giving, the free forthpouring, wherein is all delight, void of all thought of self, looking for no return or reward, expectant not of gratitude or even recognition, equally joyful in the giving, though he who receives knows not whence the gift, or, unrecognizing, repays it with injury and scorn.

This quality shows itself in many ways: in quick and ready sympathy, in alertness to see and watchfulness to note the needs of all around; in the constant, instinctive attitude of mind which spontaneously sees and feels every opportunity to give, whether service or sympathy, silence or speech, presence or absence, thinking only of the giving, never of the giver, looking for no return or recognition, utterly forgetful of self. It is loving for the sake of loving, serving for the sake of service, unheeding of aught else.

Without balance and discrimination there might be danger of mere sentimentality, of weakness, of mawkish sweetness. But in the spiritual man balance and discrimination must of necessity be present, as we have seen; therefore, in him love is strong and firm, as well as tender, wise and far-sighted, even to the giving of needful pain, as well as full of sympathy and compassion. For this divine love desires naught but the lasting and permanent welfare of those to whom it goes forth; and, seeing clearly amid the illusions around us, it welcomes even pain for its loved ones, when by anguish they can gain treasures, and powers, and gifts everlasting. But though it can thus accept pain as the gift-bringer to those it loves, yet it accepts not coldly or with indifference, for by its very nature it must share to the fullest in all their pain; and though it lift no finger to frustrate the needful work, yet itself is oftentimes rent by greater anguish than the sufferer. But seeing farther and more clearly, it has strength to await the end, giving, meanwhile, all the sympathy and all the help that the truest love can give.

But there is yet another side to this loftier love—its inner

aspect, so to say. For the divinely loving soul draws its strength and wisdom and power from those greater, more full of the spiritual life, than itself. And the quickness, the open-eyed readiness to recognize and welcome those greater than itself is also a sign of such a loving soul. But to these greater ones—whether like stars in the firmament, far away or close, hand touching hand—to them the divine love of the soul goes forth also, but differently, as devotion. For devotion best expresses this inner attitude, to those above it, of the soul that loves, since there mingles in its love towards them a something more solemn and holy, a feeling touched, as it were, with the air of the vast spaces of the stars, the mightier sweep of the one Life. But of this little can be said, since, being inward, it is not readily seen as a sign and token to the outer vision of eye or mind.

Hand in hand with these two—Balance and Love—as signs of the real life, goes Truthfulness. Not the mere ordinary abstinence from direct falsehood which men in the world profess, but a strict, constant, unceasing striving to make every thought, word and act *true* in the fullest sense of the term—the strictest accuracy, the most careful self-watchfulness, in every trivial detail, the never-relaxing effort to make oneself *perfectly* true. This it is which forms the token of this higher life, for that life, being the essentially *true* life, can tolerate no exaggeration, no inaccuracy, no smallest tampering with truth in its manifestation. But the loving tenderness just spoken of will soften and remove all hardness and harshness in speech and act, which might otherwise make the truth repellant and unlovely.

It is this harmonious and perfect blending of many qualities, their nice balance and ordered interplay, which makes the perfect balance of the nature which is such an unmistakable sign of the real spiritual life. Not, of course, that this quality attains its full development at a bound. On the contrary, it is of slow growth, and few are they who display it fully—few, because its perfection comes only with the perfecting of the divine life in man. And in reality it cannot be described, but to be known must be seen and felt. Still, enough can perhaps be said to convey the idea sufficiently to enable the student to know what to look for, and to recognize it when it comes in his way.

Besides these, then, there are many other less conspicuous signs and tokens of the presence of the real spiritual life; but as these imperfect lines aim only at giving a few of the most marked, by way of hints rather than details, I shall not attempt their consideration here. Yet, in conclusion, there is one more point to note, and that rather a thing which has been implied throughout than a new sign of the more real life. This is the complete and entire devotion to a spiritual ideal, which in all things, great and small alike, must stand first, coming second to nothing whatsoever. In the fullest sense of the term this is dutifulness—the unrelaxing effort to perform perfectly *every* duty, not for self's sake, but for the service of the divine love which called the universe into being. This it is which makes the life of man divine, which gives it coherence and direction, makes it one-pointed yet all-embracing. This gives to him the strength and fervor of the fanatic without the fanatic's narrowness or bigotry; this gives him his field of labors and his greatest strength in hours of darkness. But, taken alone, it is not characteristic of the presence in him of the real life of the Spirit; though without it that life could never grow. For it is compatible with Puritancial hardness and deep-grooved narrowness, and where these are present the life of the spirit glows dim and feeble. For the divine life is the life that gives; it knows no limitation or exclusion; its essence is peace and bliss; its manifestations are love and charity and perfect service.


For this inadequate and imperfect treatment of so great and important a theme, I tender most sincere apologies. If I have ventured to touch thereon, it has been mainly in the hope that the very imperfection and failure of my attempt might stir those who are far more competent than myself to make good the deficiency and to give to those who seek for this truer life that better guidance which their own knowledge and experience enables them to offer.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

WHAT AM I?—"A colony of myriads of life beings, which *in toto* form my body; within this the unified consciousness which has been crystalized from myriads of spirit-atoms, and which appear again as atoms of the world-soul, the union of all unified consciousness. But the world-soul goes over into the all-world-soul, which is the Eternal. That am I!—so little and so much!"

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES.

(Continued from page 38.)

 F course, there are many more illustrations of the attitude Theosophy takes towards the various topics in thought and life, but they all exhibit the uniform spirit of an insistence on fact and an indifference to conventionalism. It is of no moment whatever whether the Professors and the Theologians are horrified and indignant and protesting; the only vital question is as to realities and remedies. These once clear, the direct duty is to state them. And this brings up another point—that the statement *is* a duty. For here again the intensely practical character of the Theosophic philosophy makes imperative upon its believers the widest possible proclamation. If it was a man-made nostrum for social and individual ills, a panacea invented by speculative minds, it would rank with the sects and 'ologies of which the world is full. But, being an unfolding of the actual laws of Nature, impressed thereon and therein by the Divine hand, it is the only, the adequate, prescription for human evil. To sound it aloud in every quarter, to bring it within reach and touch of all who are ready for it, is really an act of the highest philanthropy, the truest service to universal interests. One can hardly call this "propaganda" in any opprobrious sense, any more than the widest announcement of a free mineral spring could be attributed to selfish motive. For if Theosophy is the water of life, to circulate it gratuitously and pervasively is not the self-seeking of a proprietor or an agent. The true Theosophist is eager to place within the hands of other men the health-giving truths he has found so invaluable in his own case, and this very eagerness is one proof—the great proof—that he is on the way to full spiritual vigor.

Yet in this, as in every practical matter, Wisdom is to be conjoined with Knowledge. There are, of course, questions as to time and place and opportunity, as to mode and means and method, which call for large measure of both tact and judgment. But in addition to these, there is one very great problem concerning the terms in which Theosophic truth is to be presented, and then the counsel which is to be offered to those who have become sincerely convinced. This problem arises from the fact that The-

osophy is not in this land expounded to hearers without previous conceptions of religious things, but to audiences of men and women who have in almost all cases been indoctrinated from infancy with dogmatic systems regarded as sacred. It is undoubtedly the fact that at the base of those systems is a Theosophic truth, but equally the fact that this is utterly hidden from view by the creations of later scholasticism, so that the visible beliefs are in marked antagonism to it, and their spirit peculiarly bitter. All the sects regard Theosophy as a denier of their most cherished tenets, and certainly to the greater part of these it is obliged to present a firm front of opposition. Beyond question, it never can do otherwise than treat as errors the doctrines that we are on the earth but once; that our career in this one life determines our destiny for ever and ever; that Almighty God has deputed a part of His own triune nature to enter a human body and suffer an agonizing death that sinners might thus vicariously satisfy the claims of wrath; that trust in this substitution, and not personal character, is the passport to future happiness; that we can, through mechanism rather than through merit, secure entrance into Paradise; that the Law of Cause and Effect is suspended in spiritual affairs; that physical bodies are an essential part of man, and will be reconstructed in a moment and fastened on the soul for an endless eternity; that heaven is a perpetual term of pious hymns amid artistic surroundings; that all outside of it are to burn everlastingly in undying torture. Against such monstrosities of belief Theosophy promptly utters an unflinching contradiction, as also against all other contents of the creeds which defame the character of God, traverse the facts of life, defy reason and the moral sense, are at variance with evolutionary processes and the necessity of individual effort. It is entirely true that between such notions and the realities in the universe of men and things no reconciliation is possible: no correct views can be taken till these falsehoods are expelled from the mind. And, of course, Theosophy is at war with them as utter barriers to the truth which makes free, and the duty consequent on that truth.

Moreover, antagonism is inevitable to the ecclesiastical systems which have encircled and nourished and maintained these delusions.

Churches have, indeed, to father much more than this responsibility. For not only have they fought vigorously against inquiry and thought and the entrance of light, but have insisted that only through themselves is a safe pathway for devotion, and have supplied an outfit of ceremonies and sacraments as essential to future bliss, claiming them to be of Divine appointment. That ecclesiasticism has ever been hostile to progress, is one of the truths of history. Not less demonstrable is its exclusiveness. Conditioning of spiritual life upon the ministrations of priests and the celebration of sacraments is not so obviously a menace to real development of spirituality, yet it may be proved so. For it largely transfers spiritual power from an interior process to an exterior rite, making something else than a man's own soul the area for acquisition of godliness; and it necessarily materializes spiritual things, treating them as normally unattainable unless conjoined with ceremonies. This, of course, elevates the importance of churches and the whole ecclesiastical machinery, since without these the soul is helpless; and so attention is diverted from the internal being, where alone the great work of union with the Divine is to be secured, to an external mechanism which is always powerless to effect that end, and usually operates as a check. It is hardly too much to say that the claim of Churches to be the mouthpiece of the Divine Will and the fold of safety has been one of the most effective barriers to the entrance of spiritual force.

It is here that the problem I spoke of lifts itself up before the Theosophic propaganda. Is it better to regard and attack conventional dogmas as one connected, hopeless mass of delusion, all of which should well be repudiated before Theosophy can occupy their place, or to seek for the germ of truth in error, to segregate the evil from the good, to save all of the departing system which can be assimilated, to let conservatism have judicious range? And in respect to the counsel to be given to men and women still in the Churches, but emerging from their tuition, is it better to urge that the whole ecclesiastical connection be abandoned as a drawback, or that only its injurious influence be warded off, the potent stimulus of familiar services and prayers to be retained after sifting from it mistake and poison? In other words, which is ultimately the more conducive to health—to discard altogether the old

wine and the old bottles, or to mix the new wine with the old and manipulate the bottles into still serviceable shape?

I think that this problem besets every Theosophist who has had much to do with either exposition of Theosophy or advice to Church-members who are interested in it. And it is a problem which will have far more moment hereafter than now, since Theosophy is too new to the general public for its influence to be strongly felt as yet within the ecclesiastical fold. But newspapers and thought permeate everywhere, and the time is very near when spiritual pastors will find Theosophic ideas disseminated through their flocks, raising up doubts, suggesting larger conceptions, weakening ancestral faiths, prompting to inquiry and aspiration. Then the conflict will be precipitated. Indications of it are not wanting now. But in a few years it will be in full progress. The pulpit and the platform, Theology and Theosophy, will be brought face to face. However peace-loving the Theosophist, he must repel misrepresentation and mistake, must elucidate the truths of the Wisdom-Religion and their antagonism to Church creeds and Church confessions, must show up the historical influence of the ecclesiastical spirit and the stifling effect of the ecclesiastical policy. The struggle between truth and error need not mean rancor, still less malignity; but it certainly does mean an exposure of weakness and contradiction of wrong, a vigorous call to arms in defense of right thought and right method. And then must come up still more pressingly the problem as to the new wine and the old bottles.

I frankly say that I do not think it can be settled by one inflexible rule or on one unvarying policy. There are too many complications in the case. Besides those already touched upon, there are others of this nature: Not a few still in Church circles have a clear appreciation of certain Theosophical doctrines, but retain sympathy with some of their old beliefs, particularly those connected with Jesus and the Bible—all the more so if any devotional experience has made these peculiarly tender. Now, if it is asserted that Christianity is a mistake throughout, there must be a revolt against such an assertion—not merely a sentimental protest, but a conviction that a temper which cannot recognize the elevation of Christ and the Divine quality of most of the Scripture must be de-

fective, can hardly be one fitted to sense the reality of all spiritual merit and therefore a safe guide to a broad-feeling soul. If so, there is a presumption against the doctrines thus far commending themselves, and very probably the germinating interest will be killed, the smoking flax quenched. Then there is a class which detects merit in some Theosophical positions, but finds others doubtful, and still others repellent. Insist that all or none must be accepted, and you cut away the possibilities in the future, for all will be at once declined. Then there is a class which is somewhat loosely tied to old interpretations and quite ready for fresher ones, but sees force in the argument from antiquity and does not yet perceive that Theosophy has more antiquity than any man-made scheme, or that the true Theosophist is really the true conservative. Prescribe a total repudiation of all that the Western world has held dear for centuries, and you arouse an unwillingness to concede so radical a step. Still another class has not much direct interest in Christian dogma, but holds it in some veneration as having been the stay and hope to dear friends or relations now gone, and shrinks from the supposition that they leaned upon mere fallacies. Emphasize your conviction that they were only such, and you create a distaste which makes hopeless your further teaching.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, F. T. S.

[To be continued.]

"Woe to him who would say, 'I am thou!' before he has learned to say: 'I am I!' But this must be experienced. Even a Christ said: 'I am the way!' until he had found his Gethsemane and was able to say; 'not my will but thine be done!' One attains to *Tat Twam asi* by a realization of God; what that means, he knows who has experienced his Self. Before one can bring himself as a sacrifice, one must first become a sacrifice. Be prepared, ye who have attained knowledge, when your Gethsemane comes, that you may say: 'I am thou!' which means; 'It is finished.'—F. E.

"The other world is not another place, but simply another view."—*Kant*.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

A DEPARTMENT FOR THE INVESTIGATION BY THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY OF PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE PSYCHIC LIFE.

Experiences and explanation of experiences are invited, but all personal or irrelevant detail will be omitted.

THE following lines had birth under peculiar circumstances. The author had been sent out of her body under the influence of cocaine administered for a dental operation. Either the dose was too heavy or the young lady subject too sensitive to be dealt with by the crude, disintegrating vibrations of this subtile drug, and for two days her life seemed to hang in the balance between the two worlds; but at last she returned to her body, exclaiming on awaking to this world-consciousness: "Oh, mamma, I am not afraid of Death! I am not afraid of Death!" and under this inspiration wrote this apostrophe to the Dread King:

O Death, how strong and beautiful thou art !
 I pictured thee, with quaking hand and heart,
 As stern and dread ! O Death, I pictured thee
 In gloomy shroud, and clothed in mystery !
 Forgive me, Death ! I did not understand
 That thou didst place upon this brow and hand
 The seal which made me thine,
 But clung with desperate hope to this frail life of mine.
 But, now I know thee, 'tis without a sigh
 I put this worn body by,
 And, fearing nothing, mount with thee
 To my birthright—Eternity !

Chicago, Ill.

SIDNEY FRANKLIN.

One day, while in a quiet harmonious state of mind, and resting physically, my thought became fixed, though not with any intensity, upon one of my friends. There was no effort at concentration—at least no conscious effort—when, suddenly, a silence not of earth, but an overpowering silence enveloped me; it made around me a wall isolating me from all sense consciousness. I was not afraid, and my thought remained centered on the same person. Then in a moment, I know not how, I found myself standing by my friend, who looked up with a glance of recognition and astonishment. At that instant a fear took possession of my mind, and

I returned to normal consciousness to find myself still resting in my own room.

It was no dream, as was demonstrated by the immediate inquiries of my friend, who had distinctly recognized me, and who was as much astonished at the occurrence as I was myself. Shall we ever understand the mysteries of self? E. M. C.

"The Ancients held that any idea will manifest itself externally if one's attention is deeply concentrated upon it. An intense volition will be followed by the desired result."—*Secret Doctrine*.

May not the most intense concentration be unconscious?—ED.

Atoms are called vibrations in Occultism, also sound.—S. D.

Materialistic science is fast passing into magic. Mr. Tesla, that incarnation of Fohat, calmly tells us that he expects some day to clothe himself with a robe of lambent flame that will be altogether harmless. The very successful experiments he has made on this line demonstrate the feasibility of his expectations, for already the great electrician uses currents that would keep a naked man warm at the North Pole. He obtains these currents not by the usual methods of generating electricity, but by the use and application of his discovery. This discovery of Mr. Tesla is a revolution in electric science, as it reveals the nature of this force and its universality. Every atom is electric, and electricity resolves into a mode of atomic motion. Materialistic science comes nearer, by many steps, to the teachings of the Secret Doctrine. Truth is universal. Truth is one, and so we shall find when our consciousness can realize it a little more clearly. To the Occultist the mystery of the atom stands revealed and the marvels dreamed of by a Tesla are simple facts. Let us study a little the Secret Wisdom on the subject of motion, atoms, and electricity.

In the chapter on "Creation," Vol. I, Secret Doctrine, is the following passage: "It is at this period of Evolution (fifth stage) that the absolutely eternal, universal motion, or vibration—that which is called in esoteric language 'The Great Breath'—differentiates in the primordial, first manifested atom. * * * That the simplest elements of matter are identical in nature, and differ from each other only owing to the variety of the distributions of atoms in the molecule or spark of substance, is an idea steadily

gaining ground." From this statement we learn that an atom is not a tiny particle of some substance, but a whirling center of motion. "Motion (the Breath) becomes the whirlwind, and sets them (the spawn of the fiery Fish of Life) into rotation."—*Commentary to Stanza IV.*

Then number comes into play, and brings about different rates of motion. "Motion is periodical in the Manifest," and periodicity creates rhythm or pulsation. A rhythmically moving center of force, then, is a vibration or atom. Differences in rate of motion, in mode of rhythm, produce the different essences or tatwas which, in their turn, breaking up into differing centers of motion, produce the elements. Two or more combining vibrations either of the same rate and mode or of differing rates and modes, form the molecule, with its polarities. This power of combining is Fohat, cosmic electricity hardening the atoms until they become visible.

We all talk of the earth as being a magnet. Tesla looks upon it as an electric conductor. A student of the Secret Doctrine sees it as a crystallization, so to speak, of whirling Centers of tatwic forces, which are themselves vibrations of the "Great Breath." In each center *inhere* attraction and repulsion—i. e., terrestrial electricity—which is to real electricity as the body is to the soul. "Electricity, the One Life at the upper rung of Being—Astral Fluid, the Athanor of the alchemists, at its lowest; God and Devil, Good and Evil."

He who learns to understand the nature of these atoms and to use their force becomes their master; or, rather, these "Lives" (for these vibrating centers are Lives) become his friends, and are eager to clothe him with light, envelop him in genial warmth, endow him with health, or transmit his thought and will at his command. "Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance."

M. Tesla is also working to realize the idea of transmitting messages, perhaps power, across wide spaces without any connecting wire. His method is to bring "*parallel currents, though widely separated in space, into resonating relations with each other, the one electrical current being turned to the other.*"

Have we not here a law that may be applied to thought-transference? Truly, thought and electricity are one in essence. Again

the Secret Doctrine: "Electricity which is the life of the Universe." "We call it the One Life which begins with the One Unknowable causality and ends in omnipresent Mind." Yes, and reflects itself in every molecule of earth, sea and air, in every cell of our own organism.

The marvels of electricity as dreamed of by M. Tesla are not the end. He, indeed, brings us to a new era in electrical knowledge. He gives to us the hidden secret of the electric force, but "atoms are called vibrations—and sound." A. J. W. Keely gives us a faint glimpse of the possibilities of sound. Will there come a time when man will work through tones—when Fohat will give place to Akasa; and will not electricity do the work of the world? But not yet; the world is not ready. Altruism must rule the world. Listen to H. P. B.: "The discovery (Keely's) in its completeness is by several thousand—perhaps hundred thousand—years too premature. It will be at its appointed place and time only when the great roaring flood of starvation, misery and unpaid labor ebbs back again, as it will when happily at last the just demands of the many are attended to; when the proletariat exists but in name, and the pitiful cry for bread that rings throughout the world, unheeded, has died away."

Let us hasten the day by cultivating altruistic thought and feeling.

MARIE A. WALSH.

AN EXECUTIVE NOTICE has been issued by H. S. Olcott to remove the impression that the Theosophical Society, save and except the Branch of New York (Aryan T. S.), has since 1879 been a merely *de facto* body solely, the result of growth, and not the result of votes. It contains the proceedings of two meetings, sustaining President Olcott's position as to his power to establish Headquarters of the Society, etc. This notice, will be printed in full in November issue.

To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-knowledge; and Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.—*Voice of the Silence.*

"The true master, the spirit of truth, dwells within in the sanctuary of the heart."

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

THIS DEPARTMENT IS INTENDED TO BE ONE OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE. ANY ITEMS SHOWING THE AID THEOSOPHY GIVES IN DAILY LIFE WILL BE WELCOME.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

TO my thinking, the one great benefit offered by Theosophy is the betterment of life conditions through the application of its teachings to the affairs of our daily living.

We do not want a philosophy, however beautiful, which must be relegated to our rare moments of uninterrupted spirituality. In the hurry of the present day there is little time for abstractions.

But Theosophy, with its lessons of Karma, of thought-force, is a spur to effort, a guide in all the dark bye-ways of life.

Let us once realize that everything that comes to us in life, whether of joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, is our rightfully earned karmic due; and that realization brings us into the Race of Peace—of that peace which is above happiness.

Theosophy tries to convince us that upon the working out of that karmic due depends our future, for Karma is not fatalism; it is hopefulness.

One special duty of Theosophists is to keep cheerful. A little time every day devoted to forceful thinking of helpful cheerful thoughts will do much good. Every thought which flows through a human brain spreads as surely and irresistibly as the ripple caused by a stone thrown into a stream spreads from shore to shore. We "are all members of one another," hence we should never think a discordant thought that will ripple for ever through the consciousness of others, rendering their hearts sadder, their burdens heavier, their paths harder to travel. This is not carrying out the precept, "Do as ye would be done by." Our thought-manas should make the world gladder, therefore better.

Nature flaunts her happiness upon the winds, but her sorrows and griefs, her wounds and failures, she buries under the lovely cloak of a new growth. Theosophy bids us learn from Nature. Let us obey.

ETHEL MAUDE COLSEN.

"I am that which I think. What I think that will I become. The soul is never inactive. If it is not doing good it is doing evil. Guard thy thoughts!"

Theosophy as a Guide in Life.

Theosophy teaches that thought is the creator, effort its creation; now, as success is the result of continuous effort, it follows that the best philosophy for the times is, A Philosophy of Right Thinking—which is yoga.

By right thinking I mean thinking with all one's being, instead of having a dozen thoughts at once. Time, temper and money will be saved by right thinking. Force is wasted by idle thoughts. Better rest brain and mind than have them filled with all kinds of fruitless desires and vain images. One-pointedness of thought and will, born of love, brings one in wonderful ways of opportunities. Trust the soul to its higher principles by freeing it from the turmoil of the lower ones; then the soul becomes a sure, loving guide.

There is no matter too trifling for the exercise of this right thinking. When I am shopping I say to my higher soul: "Lead me. I do not want to spend vitality, time and money foolishly." Then I close my mind to the many desires that crowd in on a mind that allows itself to drift, ever so little. I keep the thought centered on my errands and that of which I am in search comes to me. It takes quite an argument sometimes to keep these thoughts, these different ones of me, in their proper places. For instance, I am shopping for household needs or arranging for a dinner, and the dressmaker comes into my mind. I say, "Mrs. Dressmaker, will you please be still; I am not working in your line to-day." Or it is a letter that insists on intruding itself. "Letter, I am not writing you now; go away until your time comes." Or it may be a bit of gossip, a scrap of some past conversation. "Be silent; I will not listen," I say. Even Theosophy, soul of life as it is, must not be allowed to usurp the place of duty, to distract one's thoughts; so I find myself saying: "Theosophy, I love you, but I must do something else now. You must retire for a while, so *you* teach me."

And I find that this habit of thinking of one thing at a time, of applying to it with all one's heart, soul and mind, helps one to meditate.

A trained will, a clear one-pointed thought, a loving motive, make the skilled workman—the great world force. But it must

become the habit of our daily life; it must be incorporated into our being so that it is ourself. Then, indeed, the great alchemical secret is ours.

MRS QUI VIVE.

Mrs. Qui Vive has struck the keynote of all success—namely, one-pointedness of thought and motive. As a rule, only a part of us applies itself to work. Instead of whole beings, we are divided, scattered creatures.

Could we watch with our soul-eyes the busy crowds on the street we should see that the thinking part of each one was lingering behind in some nook of memory, or rushing ahead in eager anticipation, or tormenting itself in some by-way of doubt or fear. Only here and there should we find energy, will, thought, desire—the whole being—centered in the physical brain upon the work on hand. And these few one-pointed people are the great successes—the world's adepts, for they are masters of yoga.

Theosophy has a vital dynamic quality which makes it of the greatest value in daily life. Orthodoxy has taught us to endure; Theosophy teaches us to cure. For ages Orthodoxy has impressed upon struggling, sorrowing, despairing souls a doctrine of helplessness; that life is a cross which must be borne, not only patiently, but unquestioningly. Theosophy accepts the patience, but it adds to it the heroism of helpfulness. It takes the cross, analyzes it, finds out its origin, why it is a cross, why it hurts; then it proceeds to show us how to do away with the hurt, how to make that cross a symbol of knowledge, of conquest, of joyful attainment.

Theosophic teaching does not encourage mankind to submit to existing evils and miseries because they are the will of God; it forces upon us the fact that all these miseries are the effects of causes that we ourselves, as part of mankind, have created and set in motion; therefore, that we, as part of mankind, must not lose a minute in regrets, but must go to work to unmake these bad conditions, to set up other motions that will neutralize the evil and change it into good. That which we have made we must unmake. Each one of us creates his own destiny—yes, and helps to create the destiny of all.

For years disappointment dogged my footsteps: I looked upon failure as inevitable, and in a Christian spirit tried to bear my cross. Then Theosophy came and said to me: Find out the reason of these disappointments. The cause must be in yourself, somewhere. I went to work to discover the cause of my life-long failures. At last, the root of the trouble came to light.

I found that wilful fancies, selfful illusions, hindered me from perceiving true opportunities. I was out of step with the Cosmic Will; and Cosmic Will, which is world Karma, jostled me roughly. Then I used every effort to get into step, and disappointments became fewer and fewer; by and by they will cease. I shall find success—thanks to Theosophy. MARA.

AROUND THE ZODIAC.

OCT. 23RD TO NOV. 22ND.

THE Sun now enters the sign Scorpio, an occult sign. Mars belongs therein; and the constellations related to it are: (1) Serpens; (2) the Bearer of Serpens Ophiucus, allied to Esculapius, the Health Giver; (3) Heracles, type of the human soul and the deliverer of Prometheus.

Scorpio symbolizes Creation become generation; in the physical body it rules the organs of the generative function. "It contains the mystery of sex." Subjectively, it is the thought that creates. Genius and healing are at one pole; degradation and destruction at the other.

A brilliant red star (Antares) marks the heart of the Scorpion. The topaz is the gem of this sign; and it rules among minerals, the lodestone, bloodstone, and vermillion. Of plants, the bean, heather and wormwood are sacred to it. Formerly, this sign was known as the eagle.

"I am the last thought of all being and I am the first thought of all life. Through me was all created, because I thought *myself*, and in me is the beginning and end of all that is. I am the spirit of the thoughts that build the worlds and allow the worlds to become God. I think myself, so am I—and I am the only One; for without me would nothing have been thought. I am my own thought, now and in all Eternity; I am God the Spirit, the primordial thought of all that is."

T. S. ECHOES.

NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—Mr. Fullerton's address is 108 E. Seventeenth St., New York City.

In France Theosophy is gaining ground. "Le Lotus Bleu" is well received and is rapidly becoming self-supporting. Several Theosophic works have been translated.

The Center, organized some time ago in Las Vegas, is growing stronger; its members are studying in downright earnest to prepare themselves to "point out the way."

Mr. N. F. de Clifford writes from Los Angeles that Harmony Branch has full and enthusiastic meetings in spite of the hot weather. A spirit of activity shows itself in both Harmony and Dhyani Branches.

Mr. Melville S. Wadham of New Haven, Conn., has made the offer to print, at his own expense, a monthly paper, similar to the old "Forum," and free of charge, for the use of the Am. Section.

The "Vahan" reports much activity throughout England, due mostly to the lectures of Mrs. Annie Besant, who has lectured nearly every day, visiting many cities. She is truly a veteran worker, and her exposition of Theosophic truths becomes more and more luminous.

TORONTO BRANCH.—The Secty of Toronto Branch T. S., writes to correct some comments made in "Path" which he says are very misleading, and the members object to be thus misrepresented. He adds that the Branch is all right, and intends to remain so.

SAN FRANCISCO.—Golden Gate Branch of the Am. Section holds weekly meetings that are quite well attended; also a Bhagavad Gita class on Sunday morning. It is increasing in numbers. At the last meeting in Sept. five new members were admitted.

The Secretaries of Branches of Am. Section are requested to send to the editor of MERCURY notices of time and place of their respective meetings. These notices will remain in the Magazine as a Directory of the Am. Section. Items from the Branches are earnestly requested for the T. S. Echoes.

The Australian Section is full of activity. Centers, reading-rooms, and classes are forming at a rate that keeps the Gen. Sec'y, Mr. Staples,

busy. The tour of Countess Wachtmeister has been very successful, so much so as to decide that enthusiastic worker to prolong her stay in this section.

A correspondent asks for a statement of the three fundamental principles, objects, ideas, or beliefs of the Theosophical Society :

Answer.—The Theosophical Society has no beliefs. It is merely a band of students seeking for more light, more knowledge, concerning the problems of life.

The Society has three objects which are clearly stated in every number of MERCURY (see cover).

Theosophy, however, has three fundamental ideas or principles :

(a) That all things created emanate through differentiation in and from the *One Eternal Life*. This is the truth of Oneness.

(b) The continuity of conscious life and its periodic manifestation upon this earth. Otherwise called Reincarnation.

(c) The persistence and interchangeability of Force upon mental and moral planes, as well as on the physical. It manifests as the law of Cause and Effect, or Karma.

Theosophy aims chiefly :

(a) To destroy the heresy of separateness.

(b) To teach self-knowledge.

BOOK REVIEWS.

"THE THEOSOPHIC GLEANER." H. P. B., Annie Besant, Manilal Divedi contribute to the August number. Morello's charming and suggestive story, "Arthur Morgan's Dream," appears in its pages.

"THE VAHAN" of Sept. This number contains a very excellent and concise exposition of Collective Karma, by Mr. Mead; an interesting letter in regard to Theosophic Schools for the young; and Enquirer discusses the Linga Sharira and Kama Rupa.

"THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALASIA," August. Besides News of the Day, this number has an article on "Reason and Intuition." The principal feature is "A Graduated Scheme of Study," which will recommend itself to all workers in the Theosophic cause. The Editor gives a vigorous impulse to Lotus Circle Work. May his efforts be crowned with success!

"NOTES AND QUERIES" contains a concise summary of the Pere cosmic Theory, a theory which brings us a step nearer to the "Secret Doctrine."

Verse 8 of chapter IV of Genesis is elucidated by the hiatus there occurring being filled by the cabalistic rendering of the conversation between Cain and Abel which led to the murder of the latter. Ernest de Bunsen contributes three articles. The one on "Mars" deserves special mention.

"THE LAMP" for September burns brightly. Its article on the "Higher Plagiarism" explains many a literary mystery. "All thought being in existence on mental planes, * * * it is evident that as men reach equality of perfection in the art of expression, and accuracy of perception of the realities around them, there must be much of duplication and apparent imitation. The real Self, who sits at the center, knowing all things, cares as little for recognition as for the fashion of men's clothes." "Potato Planting and Buffalo Theosophy" presents a subject of practical interest. This number has a good story for children. Its International Sunday School Lessons on the Bible, as read Theosophically, are invaluable to every worker.

"THE YOGA OF CHRIST" is a neat little volume of letters from a Hindu, edited by Miss Muller of London. It is just right to hand to Christian friends who are shy of truths presented in the phrases of foreign religions. Such readers will be gently led to perceive a broader spirituality in familiar symbols by the devotional spirit of the first part of the book; at the close this mystical tone dwindles into trite little moral lectures. But the Theosophical library had space for a book preaching the plain and practical virtues that are easier to read of than to do, to offer to those who declare Theosophy is all speculation.

LUCIFER for September opens with another of Mr. Mead's learned papers on the Neo-Platonic philosophy, under the title of "Orpheus." The helpful and beautiful fragments of "The Doctrine of the Heart" deserve publication. "The Rationale of Life" gives a broad outline of the vast conceptions of the "Secret Doctrine" concerning the early races. The most valuable article is Annie Besant's continuation of "Karma." She clears up many mysteries by demonstrating how Lipikas, "the Lords of Karma," lead the reincarnating soul step by step into the shape, character, and environment required by its previous thought-forms and actions. The new Department for Questions promises to be of practical benefit and interest.

THE PATH. Three good things in the September number are: H. P. B.'s letters from Ostende, glowing with the rare virtue of gratitude; Mr. Fuszell's idea that "the Purpose of Devachan" is "for the transformation of

thought into character" and to develop the inner nature into the form of the next personality. Third, some splendid "Notes on the Bhagavad Gita," which gives a practical philosophy of action. They also contain a timely criticism of the way that talks on "the Absolute," and "obscure realms of which the Theosophists themselves know nothing at all but terminology, "are hurled" at the poor Arjunas we have caught inquiring for Truth. When will popular articles of special study replace heavy essays repeating book-learning in our periodicals?

CURRENT LITERATURE is a monthly published in New York. By sifting out the best articles from all the magazines, its classified departments sum up the current thought of the world. Half a dozen extracts each month are of special interest to Theosophists, while the latest scientific facts, the book-news, and facts and theories of daily life, keep the occult teacher abreast of the times mentally and serve to illustrate the unseen working of Theosophy's Laws. September issue reprints a wonderful article on the cell-theory of thought, called "Magic in the Brain." Chiero's new book on Palmistry is praised as simple, studious, and comprehensive, and the science itself endorsed.

"THE SELF AND ITS SHEATHS," Annie Besant's latest book, will prove a very valuable treatise both to beginners in Theosophy and also to older students.

The author declares: "I take as the source of the spiritual teaching those books that are most ancient and most sacred; * that science of Brahman which is hidden for us in the Upanishads, and is there, if we can find it, for the guiding of our feet," studying them "in the light cast upon them in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky from the Secret Knowledge," and aided by "those discoveries of Western Science that give us in concrete from the abstract Truth, so that understanding the universe on its physical side we may catch something of the Divine Word." Undoubtedly, the germ of all knowledge about Man and the Universe lies hidden in old Sanscrit Scriptures; but the sheaths of a dead language, of Oriental metaphor, of metaphysical subtleties and occult blinds, must be unfolded one by one before the beginner can grasp the living truths within. And to none, after her own great teacher, H. P. B., does the Western mind owe so great a debt for rational, brilliant and popular explanations of the laws of the Wisdom-Religion as is due to the written words and earnest utterances of Annie Besant.

Older students will enjoy the logical manner in which this difficult subject is unfolded and the many new lights shed on occult laws. These latter are rich in suggestions that unravel some intricate knots of human experience, and help the practical advancement of the individual; while the

appropriate analogies will be of service in enlightening inquirers into these Laws.

Some who are already familiar with the sevenfold division of the principles of Man as outlined in Esoteric Buddhism will, at first, feel confused by the names of the five koshas, or sheaths, of Vedantic philosophy, and may even exclaim that Annie Besant is changing her line of teaching. Do not forget that our Nineteenth Century Theosophy is an infant science in process of evolution, that many gaps and some errors occurred in the earliest instructions, and that the light of the rising sun of Thought shines brighter year by year on these world-old theories. Even as the Society has steadily advanced through mistakes in policy, through the treachery of friends, the sneers of materialists and the iron disdain of contemporaneous thought, so its literature continually expands in its scope and in added wealth of elucidation and application of broad truth, viewing them in turn in the light shed by every religion and philosophy. Therefore, it is right that Annie Besant should change, and we welcome in this little book the ripest fruits of the progress of this earnest student in a lore not limited to acquirement of knowledge, but where the Mind itself grows like the Lotus, "expanding from within, without."

On page 25 of "The Self and its Sheaths" it is written: "You must hold firm to the principle that if a thing be true, the outer and superficial difficulties are things to be conquered, without letting go the fundamental truth that you have. Have faith enough in Truth to hold to fact when you have it, and believe that if a thing be a fact it must come into co-ordination with all other truths, and as knowledge increases all superficial difficulties will gradually vanish away."

No doubt, it is a beneficial exercise for the intellect to make these two definitions correspond, lest our conceptions of Man's fluidic nature become as set and graven images, and we fall into a rut—a sad proceeding possible even in Theosophy. As a help in co-ordinating these sheaths, vehicles, souls, and principles, we place them side by side:

HUMAN PRINCIPLE.	HINDU NAME.	VEDANTIC SHEATH.
7 Spirit	Atma	
6 Spiritual Soul	Buddhi	Anandamayakosha
5 Mind	Higher Manas	Vignanamayakosha
4 Body of Desire	Lower Manas } Kama Rupa }	Manomayakosha
3 Astral Body	Linga Sharira	
2 Life	Prana	Pranamayakosha
1 Physical Body	Sthula Sharira	Annamayakosha

Manas is dual, the lower joined to Kama, the principle of desire; the Higher being the real Self, the Immortal Ego. H. P. B. pointed out to her pupils the indefinite meaning of some of the Hindu names, and her

teachings on the astral body were very confusing to those ignorant of the fact that Hindu metaphysics recognizes seven such bodies or vehicles. Although the phraseology was not so commonly used, she always taught the fivefold Vedantic classification, regarding Atma as Universal (not human), and one with Brahman.

This neatly bound little book consists of four lectures delivered in the morning sessions of the Nineteenth Convention of the T. S. at Adyar, India.

In the first, Mrs. Besant offers a clear demonstration of the deep mystery of the first differentiations from Parabrahman, the SELF that is described in Upanishads as "luminous without form, * without origin, without life, without mind." Aiding the explanations with quotations from the Secret Doctrine and Bhagavad Gita, and tales told by the microscope, and incidentally giving a very fine explanation—too long to quote—of the cause of evil and variety in the Universe, she descends from the realms of unthinkable abstractions to the connection between the SELF, or Atma in Man, and this SELF of the Universe. She quotes: "He is the bridge to immortality, adding this mystical truth." "And 'He' is Brahman, dwelling in the secret place, in the cavity of the heart, for Atma and Brahman are one, and in finding the SELF we find Brahman."

The formation of the seven Brahmic sheaths or the seven regions of the Universe, is first laid out in the second lecture. These are:

1st. Prana or Atma in its outgoing activity, for "from Atma this Prana is born," say the Scriptures.

2d. Mind or Manas; then in sequence, ether, air, fire, water, earth. As Man's sheaths correspond to these, Atma is able to come in contact with every realm, and thus build up individual self-consciousness. Of intense interest is the demonstration in detail of the marvelous activity of Atma working in matter, through the atoms and molecules, as Jiva, "the soul of atoms," on towards the life in the cells that build up the physical body whereby Man gathers experiences by contact with the material universe, quaintly styled the Sheath of Food.

The nature and friction of the Pranic sheath is thus described: "It is the outgoing energy of Atma for action, not for thought. And this works in what is called astral or ethereal matter, * and controls the whole of the lower cells, co-ordinating them to make up the food-body of man. This subtler sheath, in which Atma as Prana is working, controls and holds together the whole of the lower matter as sheath." A point worthy to be noted is the distinction between this force and the true Linga Sharira, "for the astral body that you read of in Theosophical works is nothing more than the Pranic sheath." It is also called "a bridge between all the

sheaths of Man. For this Pranic activity plays between every sheath."

The third lecture demonstrates that in the next sheath, the Manomayakosha, "comes the link of Man with all those lower Devas, the link which, when supreme control has been obtained, makes Man the master in every region of the Universe." In this important sheath is laid "the basis of the individual self-consciousness." This sheath feels desire, in common with the animal kingdom, and experiences pleasure and pain from external contact. Working on the occult law that "there is one Law and one Life everywhere, and that which in material nature you can see with your eyes, you can see with your mind in the higher regions of the Universe—for Brahman is One, and His works everywhere show the same nature"—our author draws a beautiful analogy in the fertilization of a seed-germ to the birth of a baby-Ego, the beginning of the individual consciousness, when the Sons of Mind, radiant fruits of by-gone evolution, project the vital spark of Mind into the sheath waiting to receive it. Thus it is a flower's mission to reveal the dual mystery of the involution of Spirit and the evolution of matter. Some of the finest work in the volume follows this: explanations of the origin and process of thought and illuminations of the metaphysical workings of this subtle sheath in which human consciousness is mainly active. It "collects all these sensations and turns them into percepts—that is, the connection between the outer object and the internal sensation—and then * * * changes the recognition of the connection into the ideal form which is capable of preservation and is the material for all possibility of future thought." And this is in truth the process of thinking." Every one thinks that he thinks, but how many could tell the mode of mental action? The student who, searching for the SELF, turns his eyes inward to study his vacillating centre of consciousness, finds much confusion; this is lessened by the recognition of "the double action of the Manomayakosha," or Kama-Manas. "It is in truth the organ of thinking, but is also pervaded by the senses; this double action going on in it always, the receipt from without and the elaboration from within."

This third and most valuable chapter closes with a vivid outline of the discriminating sheath, the vehicle of the Higher Manas, the seat of abstract reasoning. "These is the creative sheath of Man, as in the Kosmos Divine Ideations is the creative sheath whence all comes forth." Incidentally the vexed problem of Will and Desire is briefly and accurately solved. "Desire is the out-going energy of Atma, working in the Manomayakosha (Kama-Manas) and attracted by external objects." "Will is the outgoing energy of Atma working in this Higher Manasic sheath and dealing no longer with choice directed from without but initiated from within."

Full of the soul-stirring eloquence of Annie Besant is the last lecture, which should be read entire. To mutilate it by extracts would be unjust. In Theosophical writings we gleam but fragmentary facts concerning the Buddhi principle, the Anandamayakosha or sheath of bliss, because in its nature it is almost incomprehensible to our present stage of development.

Rising on the wings of the author's imagery, above the sorrows and limitation of earth, our imagination floats in paths of peace in the pure regions of Limitless Life, where one delicate veil alone manifests the glory of the Absolute, where "the Atma is conscious of Itself."

Then gently, gradually, she reveals the purpose of the Universe, the need of these diverse sheaths. One by one rebellions vanish and difficulties fade in the vision of the One Law directing many forces. The puzzles of our own complex personalities, the riddle of the real "I" and its reflection, are solved in understanding the double functions of the sheaths as vehicles of higher forces and as links to the seen and unseen regions of the Universe. And lastly comes the Great Lesson, applying these infinite truths to even the lowliest soul, showing how all these weary incarnations, these earth-lives of pain and struggle are training-schools for the child-Ego that must conquer desire and win the consciousness of its Divinity.

Then the final hint that the world wags just the right way to purify and make sensitive the sheaths of the human race, that each may take his appointed place in the vast evolution of this Manvantara, which brings forth as its first fruits the Masters, or Elder Brothers, the followers of the Buddhas of Compassion.

E. S.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
 Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
 Our hearts in glad surprise,
 To higher levels rise.
 The tidal wave of deeper souls
 Into our inmost being rolls,
 And lifts us unawares
 Out of our meaner cares.

—Longfellow.

Notice reaches us just as we go to press, that the Countess Wachtmeister will not be able to leave Australia until March or April, on account of new work opening to her in that country. She will then go to Honolulu and thence to San Francisco.

Attention is called to the question on the back cover of Magazine!

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

BRAHMINISM.

LONG before Pharaoh's daughter found Moses, long before Abraham migrated to the land of Canaan, great religions flourished upon the earth. Priests and prophets recorded revelations upon tablets of stone, on leaves of palm and papyrus. Youths and maidens danced before the altars and sang joyful chorals in wonderful temples where daily the people worshiped. Among these old, old religions, Brahminism is the most interesting, because it lives to-day, and the wise teachings and beautiful thoughts of its Sacred Books are studied at our Lotus Circles.

The word Brahmin signifies a praying man ; hence, Brahminism is not the ism or creed of some one great teacher, but rather a religious system established by the praying men—that is, the priesthood.

The more enlightened Brahmins have always taught that religion consists in keeping one's mind attentively and persistently fixed upon the One Eternal, Universal Spirit. One of their great teachers says that the mind, like water, takes the form of that upon which it places itself. For example, if one thinks intensely of a bird, the mind takes the form of that bird ; therefore, if one thinks intensely and constantly upon the Divine Spirit, one becomes that Divine Spirit. This persistent thinking of Eternal Spirit is the Brahminical idea of prayer. Very different from our begging to be taken care of, is it not ?

Our young folks who find half an hour's fixed attention upon one thing almost impossible will open their eyes and take a long breath when they read of people doing it for days, weeks—aye, even years. A story is told of one who became so absorbed in this thought of Brahma that the ants mistook his body for a tree and built their nests upon it. Perhaps this mistake of the ants is merely a story ; however that may be, it is certain that the Brahmins have cultivated this power of attention to an extraordinary degree. They call it yoga ; and those who practise it are called yogis.

The number of real yogis is always very small. The mass of Hindu people, far from being yogis, with their thought fixed on the Eternal, cannot even form an idea of Brahm. The Infinite One is too far from human thought; hence Brahm is not worshipped, in the usual sense of that term, by the multitude, nor even by the ordinary Brahmin. The people want some God nearer to themselves—One that can be expressed in words. In the far, far away days Brahm was worshiped in his many appearances. As lord of fire, he was Agni; as lord of the air, Vayu; as ruler of the waters, Varuna; as lord of heaven, Indra. But these deities have now given way to the Sacred Trinity, which is Brahm in his manifestations of Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of forms. This Trinity, known under the names of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, with their respective Saktis (Sakti means wife)—Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati—are the great deities of Brahminism. Vishnu, the preserver, with his wife Lakshmi, the lady of wealth and material prosperity, receive more attention than the creator Brahma and his consort Saraswati, the lady of sweet speech. But the hopes and fears of the majority of Brahminical devotees center upon Siva, the lord of death and birth, with his loving wife and inseparable companion, Parvati. They it is who rule the birth of all living things, who decree their death; they smile on the cradle and the grave, hence their names are continually invoked, and their altars are as numerous in some parts of India as the altars to the Virgin and Child are in France and Italy.

The term Brahmin no longer means simply a praying man, but one belonging to a certain class, that is said to issue from the mouth of Brahma. Besides this caste of Brahmins there are three other castes—that of the warriors, issuing from the arms of Brahma; the farmer caste, from Brahma's thighs; and the caste of traders and artisans, that sprang from his legs and feet.

When the Brahmin ceased to be a yogi and became a priest—that is, a man of ceremonies, when, instead of becoming a Brahmin by a long process of discipline and prayer, a man was born a Brahmin (one of a priestly caste)—Brahminism gradually became a system of verbal prayers, rites, and sacrifices.

Boys and girls, especially the boys, come under priestly rule as soon as they are born. Their life is divided into sections, each

section having its own duties, prayers, rites, etc. All the many details of social and domestic life, which with us are regulated by custom and good manners, are among the Brahmins regulated by religious law.

They get up in the morning in a certain way, and say certain prayers. They wash or bathe in a certain way, saying more prayers. Dressing and eating are regulated in the same way. When they go to the temples they go to worship by rule. But this worshipping and praying by rule is better than to go to church to talk and laugh. Don't you think so?

The Brahminical religion has a rich literature, teeming with quaint and beautiful stories. The books that contain most of these stories are called The Puranas; while the sacred books proper are called the Vedas, four in number; viz., Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. The God of the preserving force--Vishnu--is the center of many legends; for it is Vishnu who ever and again descends to earth to save it and its people. These descents are called Avatars. Krishna and Buddha are Avatars of Vishnu. But we will talk of Krishna next time.

MARIE A. WALSH.

OBERON'S LIBRARY.

"So this is the king's library?" I said. I heard a soft laugh, and, on turning round, saw a man of my own age, height, dressed in robes of pale green, with a sweeping white beard, a purple cap on his head, and a long, slender staff in his hands.

"You don't know me?" he said, in a musical voice; "my name is Phancie, and I am the librarian of the king."

"Ah!" I murmured, bewildered, "but how did I get here? How did the glade change into the library?"

"The glade has not changed at all," said Phancie, quietly; "it is still around you, but your eyes have been unsealed and you now see beneath the surface."

"But I don't understand," I observed, feeling perplexed.

"It is difficult," assented Phancie, gravely; "but I can show you what I mean by an illustration. When you see a grub, it only looks to your eyes an ugly brown thing; but my eyes can see below the outside skin, to where a beautiful butterfly is lying, with folded

wings of red and gold. The glade you saw was, so to speak, the skin of the library. Now your sight has been made keen by the command of the king. You see this splendid room—it is still the glade, and still the room; only it depends upon your sight being lightened or darkened.”

“It doesn’t look a bit like the glade.”

“You don’t think so, of course,” said Phancie, kindly; “but I will explain. The white pillars are the trunks of the trees; the green curtains between are the green leaves; the ceiling is the blue sky; the white globe that gives light is the moon; and the golden fretwork on the ceiling is the leaves and boughs of the trees shining against the clear sky.”

“And the books?” I answered, quickly.

“Here are the books,” he replied, drawing one of the green curtains a little on one side; and there I saw rows of volumes in brown covers, which reminded me somewhat of the tint of withered leaves.

“You can stay here as long as you like,” said Phancie, “and read all the books.”

“Oh, I can’t stay long enough for that,” I said regretfully; “I would be missed from home.”

“No, you would not,” he replied. “Time in Fairyland is different from time on earth. Five minutes with you means five years with us. So, if you stay here thirty years, you will only have been away from earth half an hour.”

“But I’m afraid.”

“Still unconvinced!” interrupted Phancie, a little sadly, leading me forward to the pool of water. “You mortals never believe anything but what you see with your own eyes—look!”

He waved his white wand, and the still surface of the water quivered, as if a breeze had rippled across it; then it became still again, and I saw my own room, and myself seated asleep in the armchair in front of the fire. I closed my eyes for a moment, and when I looked again the vision had vanished.

“How is it my body is there and I am here?” I asked, turning to Phancie.

“What you saw is your earthly body,” he said, quietly; “but the form you now wear is your real body—like the butterfly and the grub, of which I told you. Now, you can look at the books. You will not remember all you read, because there are some thoughts you may not carry back to earth; but the king will let you remem-

ber seven stories, which you can tell to the children of your world. They will believe them, but you—ah! you will say they are dreams."

"Oh, no, I won't," I said, eagerly, "because it would not be true. This is not a dream."

"No, it is not a dream," he said, sadly; "but you will think it to be so."

"Never!"

"Oh, yes, you will. Mortals never believe."

I turned angrily away at this remark, but when I looked again to reply, Phancie had vanished—faded away like a wreath of snow in the sunshine, and I was alone in Oberon's library.—*Selected from Chronicles of Fairyland.*

AIDS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

7, 9—It is very difficult to explain the Linga Sharira. We may say that it is an ethereal model or form, after which and around which is built the physical body. Consequently, the Linga Sharira cannot go far from the body—only a few yards in some cases, but the distance varies with different individuals.

This form perishes with the body; embalming, therefore, preserves it, while cremation disintegrates it at once. The Linga Sharira is often called the Astral Body; but as there are many kinds of astral bodies, all differing one from the other, it is better to adopt the Sanscrit term, Linga Sharira.

8.—Kama is Sanscrit for desire and feeling, such as love, hope, joy, pleasure, and their opposites of dislike, fear, sorrow, and pain. Loca means place; hence, Kama Loca is the place or world of desire and feelings. It is all around us; it is the world of our daily thoughts; and it is not the pleasantest world possible; in fact, there are some very disagreeable beings in it.

10.—Selflessness implies far more than unselfishness. It really means having no thought of self. It does not occur to the mind of the selfless to ask, "How do I look?" "Am I not nice?" "Dear me, how bad I am!" "What does that girl think or say about me?" A selfless person does not get hurt, nor offended, nor cross; he is not touchy, nor sulky, nor bashful, nor forward, nor afraid, nor anxious, nor disappointed. In fact, the little "I" does not figure at all in his ideas; it is all the great "We"—the We of all humanity.

NEW QUESTIONS.

11.—What is the difference between a Thought Form and an Astral Body?

12.—How do we know that we have a soul?